

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Before The
POSTAL RATE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

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POSTAL RATE COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Experimental "Ride-Along")
Classification Change for Periodicals)

Docket No. MC2000-1

OFFICE OF THE CONSUMER ADVOCATE
NOTICE OF TECHNICAL AND SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE
AND TENTATIVE STATEMENT OF ISSUES
(October 14, 1999)

The Office of the Consumer Advocate ("OCA") hereby gives notice of a technical and settlement conference to discuss the Request filed on September 27, 1999, by the United States Postal Service ("Postal Service"). On September 30, 1999, the Commission issued a notice of the Request and provided until October 25, 1999, for parties to file notices of intervention. The Commission also encouraged participants to explore settlement "at the earliest opportunity following the deadline for intervention and, preferably, prior to the prehearing conference," which is scheduled for October 28 at 1 1:00 a.m.¹ Accordingly, OCA is scheduling a technical and settlement conference for October 27, 1999, at 2:00 p.m.

¹ Order No. 1264, "Notice and Order on Filing of Request for Establishment of Experimental 'Ride-Along' Classification (and Flat Rate) for Periodicals." Ordering paragraphs 6 and 9 designated OCA to represent the interests of the general public and to act as settlement coordinator in this proceeding.

The Postal Service has expressed a desire for expedition.* In that spirit, OCA has held **informal discussions** with the Postal Service better to understand the Service's proposal and to indicate questions of interest to OCA. It is desirable that other parties also utilize informal inquiry methods to define the issues, further the exchange of information and explanations between the Postal Service and the participants, and facilitate **settlement**.³ The Postal Service and other interested parties are requested to have individuals present at the conference who are familiar with the following issues!

1. The extent of potential diversion of mail volume from Standard Mail (A) to the proposed "Ride-Along" classification
2. The accuracy of estimated net revenue effects of the proposed "Ride-Along" classification
3. The possibility, frequency, and level of detail of reporting data during the course of the experiment

The informal technical and settlement conference will be held October 27, 1999, beginning at 2:00 p.m. in the Commission's hearing room at 1333 H St., N.W., Washington, D.C. All interested persons are welcome to attend the conference, but all such persons are placed on notice that attendance at the conference will not confer party status. Any interested person must file pursuant to Rule 20 or 20a of the Commission's rules in order to intervene or to obtain limited participation status in the proceeding

² "Motion of the United States Postal Service for Expedition and for Waiver of Certain Provisions of Rule 64(h)," September 27, 1999, at 2-4.

³ In addition to informal methods, the Commission has authorized parties to conduct formal discovery upon intervention in the proceedings. Order No. 1264 at 11.

⁴ Pending the outcome of settlement negotiations, OCA requests that the Commission treat this list of issues as fulfilling the requirements of paragraph 4 of Order No. 1264.

The Secretary of the Commission is requested to arrange for publication of this Notice in the Federal Register.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ted P. Gerarden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "G".

Ted P. Gerarden
Director, Office of the Consumer Advocate